DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 316 155 HE 023 280

TITLE	The Role of Faculty in the Governance of College Athletics. A Report of the Special Committee on Athletics.
INSTITUTION	American Association of Univ. Professors, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Feb 90
NOTE	7p.; Xerox copy with some faintness, some fill-in.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; *College Athletics; College Curriculum; *College Faculty; College Students; Educational Planning; Educational Quality; Higher Education; *Teacher Responsibility; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

The report outlines general principles underlying faculty responsibility to ensure the integrity of the student athlete's educational experience and the procedures through which a faculty member should exercise that responsibility. The policy statement addresses the general allocation of authority in the governance of athletics, emphasizing the obligation of the faculty in ensuring academic primacy in an institution's athletics programs. A section on general principles identifies the following: the importance of full disclosure of information about the athletic program, the primacy of faculty responsibility for the athlete's educational experience, the faculty's role in policymaking in other aspects of the athletic program, and the institution's relationship with outside regulatory bodies. Suggested mechanisms for faculty participation include oversight of the educational experiences of athletes, institutional policy-making on athletics, and policy-making by outside bodies. The conclusion stresses that the faculty authority to establish and maintain general academic standards entails faculty responsibility to assure specific application of these standards to student athletes. A dissenting opinion encouraging the appointment by the American Association of University Professors of a committee to prepare suggestions for fundamental reform is attached. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED316155

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS

THE ROLE OF FACULTY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF COLLEGE ATHLETICS

A Report of the Special Committee on Athletics

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
American Association
of University Professors
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FEBRUARY, 1990

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HE 023 280

The Role of Faculty in the Governance of College Athletics

A REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ATHLETICS

In October 1987, the Executive Committee of the Council authorized appointment of a Special Committee on Athletics to examine the role of the faculty regarding intercollegiate athletics programs. Turning to the 1966 Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities *(jointly formulated by the AAUP, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges) for applicable Association-supported standards, the Special Committee prepared the following report, which outlines the general principles underlying faculty responsibility to ensure the integrity of the student athlete's educational experience and the procedures through which a faculty should exercise that responsibility.*

This is not the first time that the Association has examined problems concerning intercollegiate sports programs. As far back as 1926, it issued "Intercollegiate Football: Report by Committee G" (AAUP Bulletin 12, [1926]), and the Thirty-eighth Annual Meeting in 1952 approved a statement urging faculties to assume their proper academic oversight responsibilities and condemning payment of money to student athletes.*

The current report, with a dissenting opinion from a committee member, is being published for the information of the profession and with a request for comments from chapters, conferences, and other interested parties. Committee T on College and University Government has reviewed the report and has approved its publication, together with the dissent, for this purpose. In view of the seriousness, persistence, and complexity of the problems inherent in the increasing commercialization of intercollegiate athletics, comments are strongly encouraged. They should be addressed to the Special Committee on Athletics through the Association's Washington Office.

*Committee G was the Committee on Methods of Increasing the Intellectual Interest and Raising the Intellectual Standards of Undergraduates.

College athletics in this country is in continuing crisis. Even after several years of proposals and discussions of reform, the gains achieved are quite modest.

Earlier inquiries revealed significant educational neglect in major college basketball and football programs. Among the dismal revelations were findings that fewer than one in ten basketball players graduated at a large research university in the Midwest and that no black basketball players graduated in a ten-year period at a southern regional state university. Graduation rates of less than 30 percent were common. Admissions standards often seemed guided solely by athletic concerns. In addition, the integrity of universities was repeatedly compromised when boosters and alumni—and not infrequently members of the institution's staff—improperly paid money to athletes.

Despite the attention given to college sports reform in the media and elsewhere, there is ample evidence that the problems in college sports are persistent, substantial and fundamental.

Graduation rates at some schools continue to be shockingly low. A recent study revealed, for example, that 35 of 97 major basketball programs had graduation rates of 0 percent to 20 percent. These results occurred despite the existence of extensive tutoring efforts.

It continues to be true in most major programs that basketball and football players are among the worst students on campus. It is not unusual to find that the median SAT scores for basketball and football players are hundreds of points below those for the general student body. Moreover, while improper payments to athletes appear to have abated from the frenzied level of a few years ago, the practice has not disappeared, as recent investigations have revealed.

It is not surprising that the crisis in college sports continues. The fact of the matter is that the economic environment that produced academic and financial improprieties in the past has not substantially changed. The teams that win the most continue to earn the most in college sports. Adherence to rigorous admissions and academic standards is an impediment to winning, and a college that seeks to provide its athletes with a serious academic endeavor runs the risk that its competitors will not. The commercial rewards of athletic success continue to be juxtaposed to rigorous academic pursuits.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The time has come to recognize that athletics poses a major governance problem for American colleges and universities. Athletics is no longer merely an interesting extracurricular activity that occupies the campus on Saturday afternoon. In major programs, athletics often functions as an auxiliary enterprise that generates its own substantial revenues. On many campuses this has led to a suggestion that the athletic program should not be subject to the same governance structure as are more traditional educational endeavors. Moreover, policy-making in athletics is greatly affected by decisions that are made far from campus. These include decisions made in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), by competing institutions, and by the broadcasters that are providing the revenues that have financed the recent expansion of college sports.

Recent experience has shown that the athletic department should not be allowed to function as a separate entity. Such an arrangement ignores the important implications that athletics has for the college's educational program, including the potential for skewing the allocation of institutional resources and impeding the educational development of athletes. Despite the substantial amounts of money earned in athletics at some colleges and universities, almost none is used to support academic programs. Indeed, academic programs are often threatened, but seldom benefited, by changes in the fortunes of the athletic program. The impulse toward separateness of the athletic department needs to be curbed. The goal of structural reform in the governance of college sports should be more fully to integrate athletics into the educational mission of the institution.

The policy statement that follows addresses the general allocation of authority in the governance of athletics. This statement is undertaken with a realistic view of the prospects for college sports reform. It is doubtful that faculty efforts alone will be sufficient to refocus the priorities of major athletics programs. On the other hand, faculties are in a unique position to advocate adherence to meaningful academic standards. Faculties, able to speak with independence and candor, can add important balance to the discussion of reform.

The statement emphasizes the obligation of faculty in ensuring academic primacy in an institution's athletics programs. An essential message is that the faculty has primary responsibility for ensuring the educational integrity of the student's academic experience. In addition, the faculty has a vital role to play in assessing the educational and budgetary implications of decisions concerning the scope of the athletic program. This statement addresses how responsibility for policy-making on athletics should be allocated between the faculty and other components of the university.

I. General Principles

The basic framework for defining faculty responsibility in the governance of athletics is found in an earlier statement of Association policy. The 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* (jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges) underscores the need for joint participation in governance by the various constituencies within the university:

> The variety and complexity of the tasks performed by institutions of higher education produce an inescapable interdependence among governing board, administration, faculty, students, and others. The relationship calls for adequate communication among these components, and full opportunity for appropriate joint planning and effort.

The *Statement on Government* recognizes that the faculty has primary responsibility with respect to fundamental areas of educational policy and that the faculty, along with other components, should participate in the exchange of information that accompanies long-range planning.

The derivative 1972 *Statement on the Role of the Faculty in Budgetary and Salary Matters* elaborates on the faculty's joint participation in a university's internal budgetary process. An important premise of that statement is that budgetary matters are an appropriate faculty concern:

> The faculty should participate both in the preparation of the total institutional budget, and when (within the framework of the total budget) in decisions relevant to the further apportioning of its specific fiscal divisions. . . .

Both statements provide that the authority for final decision making is to be allocated among the governing boards, the president, and the faculty consistent with the responsibility that each component appropriately claims within the overall governance structure. Even where primary responsibility rests with one component, the other affected parties may have a legitimate participatory role.

A. *The Importance of Full Disclosure of Information About the Athletic Program*

In the past, the governance of athletics has been made more difficult because administrators and others have treated information about the athletic program as highly secret. Often, information critical of admission policies, the educational experience of athletes, and financial arrangements with coaches and booster clubs is revealed only as a result of scrutiny by outside agencies, such as the press or the NCAA. Such secretiveness is unacceptable in an intellectual environment that is committed to fostering open and candid discussion. It is also antithetical to effective governance.

For the future, the presumption must be that all aspects of the operation of the athletic department, including the education of athletes and the finances of booster clubs, are open to scrutiny with the university community. A special effort should be made to ensure the confidentiality of information where that is needed to protect the privacy of individual athletes and employees. In general, however, policies with respect to athletics should be subject to the same openness of debate that attends other financial and educational issues within the academic community.

B. *The Primacy of Faculty Responsibility for the Athlete's Educational Experience*

The faculty has primary responsibility for those aspects of an athlete's experience that involve education. Thus, it is the faculty's duty to ensure that the athlete has a full opportunity to participate in the educational process and that a proper balance is achieved between the athletic and educational experiences. Especially in the present era of intensive, highly commercialized college sports, there are often pressures within the athletic program that draw athletes away from the type of preparation, review, and class attendance that are fundamental to a meaningful education. The faculty has the primary obligation to ensure that pressures are tempered and that athletes have adequate opportunity to pursue educational goals. Review of faculty decisions in this area may be allocated to other governing components, but that review is to be exercised with appropriate regard for the primacy of the faculty's role.

C. *The Faculty's Role in Policy-Making in Other Aspects of the Athletic Program*

A variety of other issues involving athletic policy have a substantial administrative component and thus come within the range of authority of other units of the university. Almost all of these, however, may have important educational implications and thus are legitimately of concern to the faculty. Among the matters warranting attention are questions such as the level of competition at which the university will participate and more specific questions concerning length of playing seasons and policies with respect to team travel. A decision to move to a higher level of competition, for example, will often mean that athletes face increased pressures on their academic schedules. In the same vein, long playing seasons present a significant barrier to regular class attendance. Because of their mixed educational and administrative character, such issues of athletic policy will call for joint participation by faculty, administration, and, where appropriate, other components of the university.

In addition to its particular concerns about the impact of athletics on educational programs, the faculty has a shared interest in planning for the long-range development of the university. The faculty should also play an appropriate role in decisions about the allocation of resources with the university. Policy-making with respect to athletics affects both of these governance functions and thus the faculty is properly involved.

Faculty input is particularly important with respect to the budgetary deliberations undertaken in connection with the athletic program, even with the understanding that ultimate budgetary authority may reside in another body. The allocation of money to and within the athletic program can be a direct determinant of the level of competition that is pursued and hence greatly influences the degree of nonacademic pressure that participants experience. In addition, athletics increasingly involves major resource allocation decisions that should properly be viewed in the context of more general institutional needs and goals. A mechanism should exist for sufficient faculty participation in the budgetary decisions that determine the overall size and scope of the athletic program.

D. *The Institution's Relationship with Outside Regulatory Bodies*

Outside regulatory bodies, such as the NCAA and athletic conferences, play an important role in establishing policies that affect the internal functioning of a university's athletic programs. An individual institution's limited influence over such external entities requires special attention in the institution's internal governance structure. The coordination and execution of a university's participation is properly a function of the president or chancellor. On the other hand, the legislative deliberations of the outside body will frequently affect areas over which the faculty has primary internal responsibility.

Each institution should develop mechanisms that recognize the role of the chief executive officer in speaking for the institution, but which also afford an opportunity for faculty participation in the formulation of the institution's response. Consistent with the principles set forth above, responsibility in this area will typically be shared with other components of the university, with the weight given to the faculty's voice dependent on the particular issues and the degree of the faculty's responsibility in the area of concern.

II. The Mechanisms for Faculty Participation

A. *Oversight of the Educational Experiences of Athletes*

The importance of the faculty's role in defining and monitoring the educational experiences of athletes cannot be overstated. A candid appraisal of major college athletic programs will reveal that the internal incentives for educational achievement are modest at best. Refinement of the athlete's physical talents require a commitment of time and a level of attention that can easily become all-consuming. External pressures on coaches lead to demands that encourage, rather that temper, the emphasis on athletic preparation.

There is ample evidence of the abuses that can result. In some instances, coaches have effectively made admissions decisions with respect to athletes, typically without particular regard for the institution's normal admissions standards. Another area of persistent abuse has been special programs for tutoring and counseling athletes. Too often counseling on course selection has concentrated on maintaining the athlete's eligibility rather than providing a coherent educational program. Requests for favoritism in evaluating an athlete's course performance have been common and persistent.

The faculty must reassert its primary responsibility in monitoring the educational experiences of athletes. The candid goal of this endeavor should be to counterbalance the pressures in college sports that would subvert the athlete's educational effort. Such balance can be achieved only by removing all decision making that relates to academic matters from the commercial incentives that otherwise affect the daily functioning of the athletic department.

Several specific areas warrant faculty attention. These include admissions standards for athletes, where

the goal should be to ensure that the educational talents of athletes meet the requirement of the general student body. In addition, programs for tutoring and instruction in study skills should be the same as those offered to non-athletes. Whatever attention may be given to the special needs of athletes, the goal should be to promote the athlete's fuller integration into the student body.

The faculty should also give special attention to ensuring that the athlete's individual curriculum has coherency and reflects normal progress through a recognized degree program. The temptation to elevate maintenance of the athlete's eligibility over substantive academic achievement should specifically be resisted. Because of the uncertainty and changes that can attend any student's movement through the university, ensuring that there is substance to the athlete's educational program will be a particular challenge. However, the goal of the faculty's endeavor in this area is clear: to temper the effects of athletic participation on the student's educational choices.

The mechanisms for faculty monitoring are already in place in many institutions. These take the form of committees and offices that set general academic policy and provide oversight. The issues raised are often of importance to the administration and it is appropriate that the faculty's primary responsibility in this area be carried out through a structure that utilizes existing administrative entities and involves appropriate administrative participation. As with every faculty function, the goal of the governing entities in this area is to ensure that relevant information is adequate and that participation is sought from all affected parties.

Coordination of the faculty's role in these endeavors can appropriately be the responsibility of the representative faculty senate or assembly. To the extent that there is a need for a distinctive faculty voice on such educational issues, the faculty senate or assembly is the appropriate body to provide it.

In some situations, the faculty will find it necessary to use carefully structured *ad hoc* inquiries to fulfill its monitoring function. Periodic audits of the athletes' educational experiences will often be appropriate.

B. *Institutional Policy-Making on Athletics*

An internal forum should be available in which the various components of the university, including the faculty, jointly deliberate the formulation of athletic policy. A university-level athletic committee with representation from those with applicable governance authority would be appropriate. Because of the high degree of faculty responsibility for many of the issues presented, the faculty representation on such a body should be substantial.

An issue of particular importance is the method for selecting the faculty participants. The selection should be undertaken with a view to ensuring the independence of the faculty voice and thus direct election by the general faculty or its elected governing body is preferable. Such direct election will also serve to define lines of responsibility within the faculty.

The faculty's involvement in the joint policy-making body should be undertaken in furtherance of a governance role that includes heightened responsibility for many of the matters under consideration. Thus, the function of the body is to be more than advisory.

A broad range of matters would be expected to come before such a body. The degree of finality to be accorded to such joint deliberations will be determined by the allocation of responsibility among the various governing components. Because of the mixed nature of many athletics issues, however, the joint deliberative body will often be the most appropriate device for resolving issues that overlap the primary responsibilities of the participating entities. In these instances, its deliberations should carry a presumption of finality.

C. *Policy-Making by Outside Bodies*

Because of the significant internal effects of rule-making by external associations, a university should take steps to ensure that its voice is heard in whatever deliberations accompany the external decision making. Once the institution has formulated its positions on important issues, the president or chancellor or other designated representatives should be able to present the institution's position as a unified one.

A structure should be established to allow participation by internal components, including faculty, so that the institution's positions are carefully and thoroughly developed before they are advocated to the external body. As with internal governance, the degree of faculty responsibility will vary depending on the nature of the policy in question. The faculty's responsibility, and hence its interest, will be highest with respect to those regulations that have the most significant implications for the educational experiences of athletes. The faculty perspective is also important for issues that have major budgetary implications and those that define the level of importance assigned to athletics within the institution. The same university-level committee that decides internal athletics policy may prove the appropriate vehicle for faculty participation. On matters of significant educational importance, full deliberation by the elected faculty assembly may be necessary.

In external organizations that invite the participation of a faculty representative, the person so designated should enjoy the support of the faculty. The importance of the university's speaking with unity suggests that the representative must also have the support of the administration. The goal of mutual acceptance is satisfied by a selection technique that provides for the designation of the faculty representative by the chief administrative officer with the advice and consent of the faculty as expressed through its faculty senate or other representative body.

III. Conclusion

The faculty authority to establish and maintain general academic standards entails faculty responsibility to assure specific application of these standards in the education of student athletes.

The faculty is responsible for reviewing academic programs for student athletes. The faculty must assure the primacy of academic concerns in athletics as well as other student programs. Protection of academic

integrity against misplaced internal priorities or external demands in athletics programs, as in other matters, is the essential reason for the faculty's role in institutional governance.

The specific procedural concerns delineated in the body of this report require application and elaboration appropriate to circumstances. The overriding principle, however, is that responsibility for the academic welfare of student athletes is not an extra-curricular or departmental obligation of a few faculty members and administrators; it is a fundamental responsibility of the faculty as a whole.

The Special Committee on Athletics
JOHN C. WEISTART (Law),
Duke University, *chair*
LONNIE D. KLIEVER (Religious Studies),
Southern Methodist University
HENRY L. MASON (Political Science),
Tulane University

A Dissenting Opinion

The above report declares, quite truly, that the problems of college sports are "substantial and fundamental." This presents the Association with an opportunity to take the lead (which no other organization has done) in calling for truly "substantial and fundamental" reforms. If we were to do that, we would be making a major contribution to academic integrity. By calling for major reforms, we would position the AAUP as an organization in the lead of the education community on an issue of great importance.

The report approved by a majority of the committee enunciates some worthwhile principles of faculty participation in the governance of athletics, which would be highly useful, if fundamental reform were to occur. It calls for faculty primacy in controlling educational standards with respect to athletes. It urges faculty participation in other aspects of athletic administration. But the report itself concedes that such faculty efforts would, by themselves, not "be sufficient to refocus the priorities of major athletic programs."

It is unlikely that faculty members on individual campuses would or could have a great deal of influence, until the basic system changes. Under this system, costs are high. Not every college can win, and losing on the field causes financial losses. These losses are in one way or another absorbed out of funds that might have served academic purposes. As long as a losing season brings huge financial losses, administrative offices are pressured to go along with or wink at what will win. Frequently, winning policies are dishonest academically and in other ways as well.

Those faculty members who are appointed to the committees dealing with athletics are under pressure to allow whatever policies will make their team competitive, as long as rival teams at other colleges are doing the same. That is why it is difficult to attack this problem by faculty initiative on a campus-by-campus basis. Leadership has to come from the national level if there is to be change.

The Association should appoint a committee to prepare suggestions for fundamental reform. Among the measures considered should be ineligibility for freshmen, shorter practices and seasons, an end to recruiting, to athletic scholarships, and to lower admissions standards for athletes. We should explore what can be done to further the establishment of professional minor leagues, which would afford athletes who lack academic interests or talents an alternative route to an athletic career. The new committee should also be asked to take a close look at the financial implications of the current system, investigating whether college sports do "make money," and if so, where and for whom and for what.

Finally, the new committee should address the issue of whether, under cover of giving a few black athletes a "chance at college they would not otherwise have," the current athletics system covers covers up the lag in bringing to campus disadvantaged black students who are interested in an education and could benefit from it.

BARBARA R. BERGMANN (Economics),
American University
Member of Special Committee on Athletics

BEST COPY AVAILABLE